

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 17 October 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
17 OCTOBER 1968

1. Czechoslovakia -
Soviet Union

Moscow now has a status-of-forces agreement which it can cite as legal authority for the continued presence of its forces in Czechoslovakia. The agreement was signed last night in Prague by Premiers Kosygin and Cernik. The text of the treaty has not yet been published, but it will probably allow the Soviets to maintain some 100,000 troops in occupation. Kosygin said yesterday that other Warsaw Pact forces will be withdrawn by stages within the next few months.

Having gained one major goal, Moscow may now try to pressure Prague into a formal admission that the intervention was justified by the existence of a "counterrevolutionary" situation. Such an admission would open the gates to a broad purge of the Czechoslovak party and government.

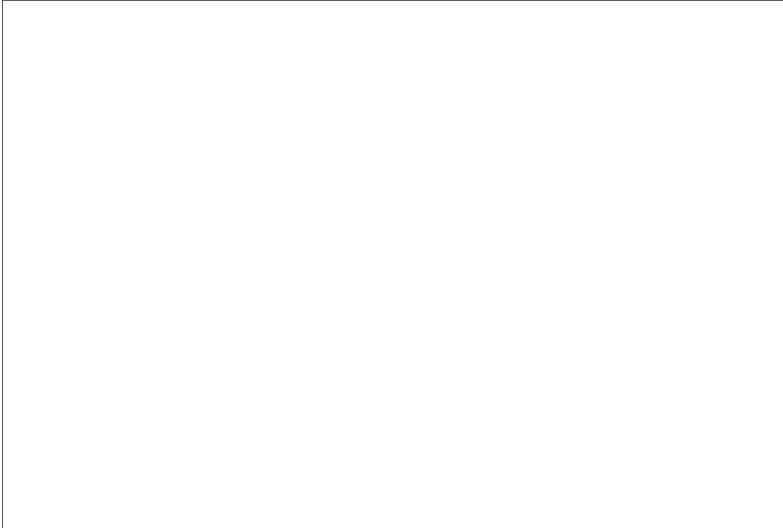
2. Soviet Union

The Soviets will probably try another circumlunar mission this year, but not this month. Soviet space support ships in the Atlantic and Indian oceans have left their stations for nearby ports,

3. Soviet Union

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4. Communist China -
United Kingdom

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5. United Kingdom -
Rhodesia

The Rhodesians are keeping the door open to further negotiations on the terms offered by Wilson in the talks at Gibraltar. Although Wilson made concessions of form, he did not yield on the basic question of ultimate majority rule in Rhodesia.

The Rhodesians are no more ready now than before to accept this. Yet Ian Smith, now back in Salisbury, stated yesterday that there is "a distinct possibility" of settlement if London will drop its demand that Rhodesia accept the final authority of the British Privy Council.

This authority is important in providing London a means of seeing that the terms of an agreement are carried out. Smith will probably continue negotiations with Commonwealth Secretary Thomson in Salisbury.

6. Guyana

Prime Minister Burnham is still not publicizing his plan to dissolve parliament next month and call for elections in December. He feels that conditions are favorable to him this year, while they might not be next March, by which time elections must be held. The junior party in Burnham's coalition government could withdraw even before the dissolution of parliament, since the partners are at loggerheads over a proposed election law.

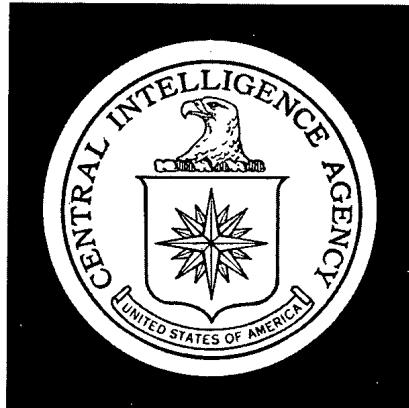
Cheddi Jagan admits his party has no chance in an election run by Burnham, but he will stay in the race just the same. Cheddi is looking further into the future and is trying to convert his party into a tightly knit Communist organization.

7. Philippines-Malaysia

The Philippine-Malaysian ministerial talks planned for next week in Tokyo have been scuttled by a provocative speech made by Philippine Foreign Secretary Ramos at the UN on Tuesday, apparently on instructions from President Marcos. Ramos asserted that Malaysia has no authority to represent or speak for Sabah. The reaction of Malaysian Prime Minister Rahman was to call off the Tokyo meeting.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes

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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Le Duc Tho Moves On: Le Duc Tho left Moscow on 16 October after two days of consultations with the Soviets.

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Radio Commentary on Paris Talks: A Hanoi Radio domestic commentary on 15 October reviews the Paris talks in familiar hard-line terms and carries on the theme that a bombing halt will create favorable conditions for a "correct" settlement of the war. It offers no clues to Hanoi's current tactics and promises nothing specific for a postbombing period.

After reaffirming Hanoi's "sacred right" of "fighting and chasing the aggressors anywhere," the broadcast stresses that "the Vietnamese people" have always been ready to move toward a "correct settlement" on the basis of the Four Points and the political program of the Liberation Front. Such a settlement, it said, must be based on the "independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity" of Vietnam "as recognized by the Geneva Agreements." It also requires, according to the broadcast, that the US end its "aggression," withdraw its troops from the South and "recognize" and "talk" with the Front about "the related problems in South Vietnam."

The broadcast gave short shrift to the matter of South Vietnamese representation, saying only that the US had used the Paris talks to "make propaganda in favor of the Saigon puppet regime." On the bombing issue, the broadcast quoted President Johnson's speech of 10 October expressing hope for an early end to the war. Seemingly in response to the President,

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it said that "if the United States ends the bombing of North Vietnam soon, it will have conditions for correctly settling the Vietnam problem."

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Coal Industry Problems: In a "recent" speech to coal miners, Pham Van Dong stated that their industry had "failed to achieve progress in the past few years" even though "the amount of equipment and material supplies to the mining areas have been further increased." Pham accused the workers of failing to work satisfactorily, of not working all the workday, and of failing to uphold labor discipline. He also accused them of failing to regard coal production as a revolutionary or anti-US struggle and hence falling into "bureaucratic or unrealistic" leadership practices.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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